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THE
ENGLISH GARDEN:
A
POEM.
BOOK THE FIRST.

BY
W. MASON, M. A.
THE THIRD EDITION.

A GARDEN IS THE PUREST OF HUMAN PLEASURES, IT IS THE GREATEST REFRESHMENT TO THE SPIRITS OF MAN; WITHOUT WHICH BUILDINGS AND PALACES ARE BUT GROSS HANDY-WORKS. AND A MAN SHALL EVER SEE, THAT WHEN AGES GROW TO CIVILITY AND ELEGANCY, MEN COME TO BUILD STATELY, SOONER THAN TO GARDEN FINELY: AS IF GARDENING WERE THE GREATER PERFECTION.

VERULAM.

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M.DCC.LXXVIII.



T H E
E N G L I S H G A R D E N.

B O O K T H E F I R S T.

TO thee, divine SIMPLICITY! to thee,
Best arbitress of what is good and fair,
This verse belongs. O, as it freely flows,
Give it thy powers of pleasing: else in vain
It strives to teach the rules, from Nature drawn, 5
Which all should follow, if they wish to add
To Nature's careless graces; loveliest then,
When, o'er her form, thy easy skill has taught
The robe of Spring in ampler folds to flow.
Haste Goddess! to the woods, the lawns, the vales; 10
That lie in rude luxuriance, and but wait
Thy call to bloom with beauty. I meanwhile,
Attendant on thy state serene, will mark

B

Its

Its faery progress ; wake th' accordant string ;
 And tell how far, beyond the transient glare 15
 Of fickle fashion, or of formal art,
 Thy flowery works with charm perennial please.

Ye too, ye sister Powers ! that, at my birth,
 Auspicious smil'd ; and o'er my cradle drop'd
 Those magic seeds of Fancy, which produce 20
 A Poet's feeling, and a Painter's eye,
 Come to your votary's aid. For well ye know
 How soon my infant accents lisp'd the rhyme,
 How soon my hands the mimic colours spread,
 And vainly hop'd to snatch a double wreath 25
 From Fame's unfading laurel : arduous aim ;
 Yet not inglorious ; nor perchance devoid
 Of fruitful use to this fair argument ;
 If so, with lenient smiles, ye deign to chear,
 At * this sad hour, my desolated soul. 30

For

* This poem was begun in the year 1767, not long after the death of the amiable person here mentioned.



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3

For deem not ye that I resume the lyre
 To court the world's applause: my years mature
 Have learn'd to slight the toy. No, 'tis to sooth
 That agony of heart, which they alone,
 Who best have lov'd, who best have been belov'd, 35
 Can feel, or pity; sympathy severe!
 Which she too felt, when on her pallid lip
 The last farewell hung trembling, and bespoke
 A wish to linger here, and bless the arms
 She left for heaven. She died, and heav'n is hers! 40
 Be mine, the pensive solitary balm
 That recollection yields. Yes, Angel pure!
 While Memory holds her seat, thy image still
 Shall reign, shall triumph there; and when, as now,
 Imagination forms a Nymph divine 45
 To lead the fluent strain; thy modest blush,
 Thy mild demeanor, thy unpractis'd smile
 Shall grace that Nymph, and sweet Simplicity
 Be dress'd (Ah meek MARIA!) in thy charms.

Begin the Song! and ye of Albion's sons 50
 Attend; Ye freeborn, ye ingenuous few,
 Who heirs of competence, if not of wealth,
 Preserve that vestal purity of soul
 Whence genuine taste proceeds. To you, blest youths,
 I sing; whether in academic groves 55
 Studious ye rove, or, fraught with learning's stores,
 Visit the Latian plain, fond to transplant
 Those arts which Greece did, with her Liberty,
 Relinquish to Rome. Yet know, the art I sing
 Ev'n there ye shall not learn. Rome knew it not 60
 While Rome was free: Ah! hope not then to find
 In slavish superstitious Rome the fair
 Remains. Meanwhile, of old and classic aid
 Tho' fruitless be the search, your eyes entranc'd
 Shall catch those glowing scenes, that taught a CLAUDE 65
 To grace his canvases with Hesperian hues,
 And scenes like these, on Memory's tablet drawn,
 Bring back to Britain; there give local form
 To each Idea; and, if Nature lend

THE ENGLISH GARDEN.

5

Materials fit of torrent, rock, and shade, 70
 Produce new TIVOLIS. But learn to rein,
 O Youth! whose skill essays the arduous task,
 That skill within the limit she allows.
 Great Nature scorns controul: she will not bear
 One beauty foreign to the spot or soil 75
 She gives thee to adorn: 'tis thine alone
 To mend, not change her features. Does her hand
 Stretch forth a level lawn? ah, hope not thou
 To lift the mountain there. Do mountains frown
 Around? ah, with not there the level lawn. 80
 Yet she permits thy art, discreetly us'd,
 To smooth or scoop the rugged and the plain.
 But dare with caution; else expect, bold man!
 The injur'd Genius of the place to rise
 In self-defence, and, like some giant fiend 85
 That frowns in Gothic story, swift destroy,
 By night, the puny labours of thy day.

What then must he attempt, whom niggard fate
 Has fixt in such an inauspicious spot

As

6 THE ENGLISH GARDEN.

As bears no trace of beauty? must he sit 90
Dull and inactive in the desert waste,
Since Nature there no happy feature wears
To wake and meet his skill? Believe the Muse,
She does not know that inauspicious spot
Where Beauty is thus niggard of her store : 95
Believe the Muse, thro' this terrestrial vast
The seeds of grace are sown, profusely sown,
Ev'n where we least may hope: the desert hills
Will hear the call of art; the vallies dank
Obey her just behests, and smile with charms 100
Congenial to the soil, and all its own.

For tell me, where's the desert? there alone
Where man resides not; or, if chance resides,
He is not there the man his maker form'd,
Industrious man, by heav'n's first law ordain'd 105
To earn his food by labour. In the waste
Place thou that man with his primæval arms,
His plough-share, and his spade; nor shalt thou long

Im-

THE ENGLISH GARDEN.

7

Impatient wait a change : the waste shall smile
With yellow harvests ; what was barren heath 110
Shall soon be verdant mead. Now then arise ;
Now let thy art, in union with his toil,
Exert its powers, and give, with varying skill,
The soil, already tam'd, its finish'd grace.

Nor less obsequious to the hand of toil, 115
If fancy guide that hand, will the dank vale
Receive improvement meet : but Fancy here
Must lead, not follow Labour ; she must tell
In what peculiar place the soil shall rise,
Where sink ; prescribe what form each sluice shall wear, 120
And how direct its course ; whether to spread
Broad as a lake, or, as a river pent
By fringed banks, weave its irriguous way
Thro' lawn and shade alternate : for if She
Preside not o'er the task, the narrow drains 125
Will run in tedious parallel, or cut
Each other in sharp angles ; call her then

Swift

8 THE ENGLISH GARDEN.

Swift to thy aid; ere the remorseless spade
Too deeply wound the bosom of the soil.

Yet, in this lowly site, where all that charms 130
Within itself must charm, hard is the task
Impos'd on Fancy. Hence with idle fear!
Is she not Fancy? and can Fancy fail
In sweet delusions, in concealments apt,
And wild creative power? She cannot fail. 135
And yet, full oft, when her creative power,
Her apt concealments, her delusions sweet
Have been profusely lavish'd; when her groves
Have shot, with vegetative vigour strong,
Ev'n to their wish'd maturity; when Jove 140
Has roll'd the changeful seasons o'er her lawns,
And each has left a blessing as it roll'd:
Ev'n then, perchance, some vain fastidious eye
Shall rove unmindful of surrounding charms
And ask for prospect. Stranger! 'tis not here. 145
Go seek it on some garish turret's height;

Seek

THE ENGLISH GARDEN.

9

Seek it on Richmond's or on Windsor's brow :

There gazing, on the gorgeous vale below,

Applaud before, with fashion'd pomp of phrase,

The good and bad, which, in profusion, there

150

That gorgeous vale exhibits. Here meanwhile,

Ev'n in the dull, unseen, unseeing dell,

Thy taste contemns, shall Contemplation imp

Her eagle plumes ; the Poet here shall hold

Sweet converse with his Muse ; the curious Sage,

155

Who comments on great Nature's ample tome,

Shall find that volume here. For here are caves,

Where rise those gurgling rills, that sing the song

Which Contemplation loves ; here shadowy glades,

Where thro' the tremulous foliage darts the ray,

160

That gilds the Poet's day-dream ; here the turf

Teems with the vegetating race, the air

Is peopled with the insect tribes, that float

Upon the noontide beam, and call the sage

To number and to name them. Nor if here

165

The painter comes, shall his enchanting art

C

Go

10 THE ENGLISH GARDEN.

Go back without a boon : for Nature here
 Has with her living colours, form'd a scene
 Which RUISDALE best might rival : Chrystal lakes,
 O'er which the giant oak, himself a grove, 170
 Flings his romantick branches, and beholds
 His reverend image in th' expanse below.
 If distant hills be wanting, yet our eye
 Forgets the want, and with delighted gaze
 Rests on the lovely foreground ; there applauds 175
 The art, which, varying forms and blending hues,
 Gives that harmonious force of shade and light,
 Which makes the landscape perfect. Art like this
 Is only art, all else abortive toil.

Thou then, the docile pupil of my song, 180
 Attend ; and learn how much on Painting's aid
 Thy sister art depends : learn now its laws ;
 Their practice may demand a future strain.

Of Nature's various scenes the painter culls
 That for his fav'rite theme, where the fair whole 185
 Is

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11

Is broken into ample parts, and bold ;
 Where to the eye three well-mark'd distances
 Spread their peculiar colouring. Vivid green,
 Warm brown and black opaque the foreground bears
 Conspicuous ; sober olive coldly marks 190
 The second distance ; thence the third declines
 In softer blue, or less'ning still is lost
 In faintest purple. When thy taste is call'd
 To adorn a scene where Nature's self presents
 All these distinct gradations, then rejoice 195
 As does the painter, and like him apply
 Thy colours ; plant thou on each separate part
 Its proper foliage. Chief, for there thy skill
 Has its chief scope, enrich with all the hues
 That flowers, that shrubs, that trees can yield, the sides 200
 Of that fair path, from whence our sight is led
 Gradual to view the whole. Where'er thou wind'st
 That path, take heed between the scene, and eye,
 To vary and to mix thy chosen greens.
 Here for a while with cedar or with larch, 205

That from the ground spread their close texture, hide
 The view entire. Then o'er some lowly tuft,
 Where rose and woodbine bloom, permit its charms
 To burst upon the sight ; now thro' a copse
 Of beech, that rear their smooth and stately trunks,
 Admit it partially, and half exclude,
 And half reveal its graces : in this path,
 How long soe'er the wanderer roves, each step
 Shall wake fresh beauties ; each short point present
 A different picture, new, and yet the same.

210

215

Yet some there are who deem this precept vain,
 And fell each tree that intercepts the scene.
 O great POUSSIN ! O Nature's darling, CLAUDE !
 What if some rash and sacrilegious hand
 Tore from your canvass those umbrageous pines
 That frown in front, and give each azure hill
 The charm of contrast ! Nature suffers here
 Like outrage, and bewails a beauty lost
 Which Time with tardy hand shall late restore.

220

Yet

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13

Yet here the spoiler rests not; see him rise 225
 Warm from his devastation, to improve,
 For so he calls it, yonder champion wide.
 There on each bolder brow in shapes acute
 His fence he scatters; there the Scottish fir
 In murky file lifts his inglorious head, 230
 And blots the fair horizon. So should art
 Improve thy pencil's savage dignity,
 SALVATOR! if where, far as eye can pierce,
 Rock pil'd on rock, thy Alpine heights retire,
 She flung her random foliage, and disturb'd 235
 The deep repose of the majestic scene.
 This deed were impious. Ah, forgive the thought,
 Thou more than painter, more than poet! HE,
 Alone thy equal, who was "Fancy's child."

Does then the Song forbid the planter's hand 240
 To clothe the distant hills, and veil with woods
 Their barren summits? No, but it forbids
 All poverty of clothing. Rich the robe,

And

And amply let it flow, that Nature wears
On her thron'd eminence : where'er she takes 245
Her horizontal march, pursue her step
With sweeping train of forest ; hill to hill
Unite with prodigality of shade.
There plant thy elm, thy chefnut ; nourish there
Those sapling oaks, which, at Britannia's call, 250
May heave their trunks mature into the main,
And float the bulwarks of her liberty :
But if the fir, give it its station meet ;
Place it an outgard to th' assailing north,
To shield the infant scions, till possess 255
Of native strength, they learn alike to scorn
The blast and their protectors. Foster'd thus,
The cradled hero gains from female care
His future vigor ; but, that vigor felt,
He springs indignant from his nurse's arms, 260
He nods the plummy crest, he shakes the spear,
And is that awful thing which heav'n ordain'd
The scourge of tyrants, and his country's pride.

If

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15

If then thou still art dubious how to treat
 Nature's neglected features, turn thy eye 265
 To those, the masters of correct design,
 Who, from her vast variety, have cull'd
 The loveliest, boldest parts, and new arrang'd ;
 Yet, as herself approv'd, herself inspir'd.
 In their immortal works thou ne'er shalt find 270
 Dull uniformity, contrivance quaint,
 Or labour'd littleness; but contrasts broad,
 And careless lines, whose undulating form
 Plays thro' the varied canvass: these transplant
 Again on Nature ; take thy plastic spade, 275
 It is thy pencil ; take thy seeds, thy plants,
 They are thy colours ; and by these repay
 With interest every charm she lent thy art.

But, while I thus to Imitation's realm
 Direct thy step, deem not I lead thee wrong ; 280
 Nor ask, why I forget great Nature's fount,
 And bring thee not the bright inspiring cup

From

From her original spring? Yet, if thou ask'st,
Thyself shalt give the answer. Tell me why
Did RAPHAEL steal, when his creative hand
Imag'd the Seraphim, ideal grace

285

And dignity supernal from that store
Of Attic sculpture, which the ruthless Goth
Spar'd in his headlong fury? Tell me this:
And then confess that beauty best is taught
By those, the favor'd few, whom Heav'n has lent
The power to seize, select, and reunite
Her loveliest features; and of these to form
One Archetype compleat of sovereign Grace.
Here Nature sees her fairest forms more fair;
Owns them her own, yet owns herself excell'd
By what herself produc'd. Here Art and she
Embrace; connubial Juno smiles benign,
And from the warm embrace perfection springs.

290

295

Rouse then each latent energy of soul
To clasp ideal beauty. Proteus-like,

300

Think

Think not the changeful Nymph will long elude

Thy chafe, or with reluctant coyness frown.

Inspir'd by her thy happy art shall learn

To melt in fluent curves whate'er is straight,

305

Acute, or parallel. For, these unchang'd,

Nature and she disdain the formal scene.

'Tis their demand, that ev'ry step of Rule

Be quite eraz'd. For know, their ev'ry charm

Springs from Variety; but all the boast

310

Of Rule is irksome Uniformity.

That end to effect we own the cube, or cone,

Are well employ'd; but fair Variety

Lives only where she undulates and sports

In many a winding train. As Nature then

315

Avoids, disdains, abhors all equal lines;

So Mechanism pursues, admires, adores.

Hence is their enmity; and sooner hope

With hawks and doves to draw the Cyprian car,

Than reconcile these jarring principles.

320

Where then, alas, where shall the Dryads fly

That haunt yon antient Vista? Pity, sure,

D

Will

Will spare the long cathedral isle of shade
In which they sojourn ; Taste were sacrilege,
If, lifting there the axe, it dar'd invade 325
Those spreading oaks that in fraternal files
Have pair'd for centuries, and heard the strains
Of SIDNEY's, nay, perchance, of SURRY's reed.
Heav'ns ! must they fall ? They must, their doom is past.
None shall escape : unless mechanic Skill, 330
To save her offspring, rouse at our command ;
And, where we bid her move, with engine huge,
Each ponderous trunk, the ponderous trunk there move.
A work of difficulty and danger try'd,
Nor oft successful found. But if it fails, 335
Thy axe must do its office. Cruel task,
Yet needful. Trust me, tho' I bid thee strike,
Reluctantly I bid thee : for my soul
Holds dear an antient oak, nothing more dear ;
It is an antient Friend. Stay then thine hand ; 340
And try by saplings tall, discreetly plac'd
Before, between, behind, in scatter'd groups,

To

To break th' obdurate line. So may'st thou save
A chosen few ; and yet, alas, but few
Of these, the old protectors of the plain. 345
Yet shall these few give to thy opening lawn
That shadowy pomp, which only they can give :
For parted now, in patriarchal pride,
Each tree becomes the father of a tribe ;
And, o'er the stripling foliage, rising round, 350
Towers with parental dignity supreme.

And yet, My Albion ! in that fair domain
Which Ocean made thy dowry, when his Love
Tempestuous tore thee from reluctant Gaul,
And bad thee be his Queen, there still remains 355
Full many a lovely unfrequented wild,
Where change like this is needless ; where no lines
Of hedge-row, avenue, or of platform square
Demand destruction. In thy fair domain,
Yes, my lov'd Albion ! many a glade is found, 360
The haunt of Wood-gods only : where if Art

E'er dar'd to tread ; 'twas with unsandal'd foot,
Printless, as if the place were holy ground.
And there are scenes, where, tho' she whilom trod,
Led by the worst of guides, fell Tyranny, 365
And ruthless Superstition, we now trace
Her footsteps with delight ; and pleas'd revere
What once we should have hated. But to Time,
Not her, the praise is due : his gradual touch
Has moulder'd into beauty many a tower, 370
Which, when it frown'd with all its battlements,
Was only terrible ; and many a fane
Monastic, which, when deck'd with all its spires,
Serv'd but to feed some pamper'd Abbot's pride,
And awe th' unletter'd vulgar. Generous Youth, 375
Whoe'er thou art, that listen'st to my lay,
And feel'st thy soul assent to what I sing,
Happy art thou if thou can'st call thine own
Such scenes as these : where Nature and where Time
Have work'd congenial ; where a scatter'd host 380
Of antique oaks darken thy fidelong hills ;

While,

While, rushing thro' their branches, rifted cliffs
 Dart their white heads, and glitter thro' the gloom.
 More happy still, if one superior rock
 Bear on its brow the shiver'd fragment huge
 Of some old Norman fortrefs; happier far,
 Ah, then most happy, if thy vale below
 Wash, with the chrystal coolness of its rills,
 Some mouldring abbey's ivy-vested wall.

385

O how unlike the scene my fancy forms,
 Did Folly, heretofore, with Wealth conspire
 To plan that formal, dull, disjointed scene,
 Which once was call'd a Garden. Britain still
 Bears on her breast full many a hideous wound
 Given by the cruel pair, when, borrowing aid
 From geometric skill, they vainly strove
 By line, by plummet, and unfeeling sheers,
 To form * with verdure what the builder form'd

390

395

With

* Altho' this seems to be the principle upon which this false taste was founded,
 yet the error was detected by one of our first writers upon architecture. I shall
 transcribe

With stone. Egregious madnefs; yet purfu'd
 With pains unwearied, with expence unfumm'd, 400
 And fcience doating. Hence the fidelong walls
 Of fhaven yew; the holly's prickly arms
 Trimm'd into high arcades; the tonfile box
 Wove, in mofaic mode of many a curl,
 Around the figur'd carpet of the lawn. 405
 Hence too deformities of harder cure:

The

tranfcribe the paffage, which is the more remarkable as it came from the quaint
 pen of Sir Henry Wotton: "I muft note (fays he) a certain contrariety be-
 " tween building and gardening: for as fabricks fhould be regular, fo gar-
 " dens fhould be irregular, or at leaft caft into a very wild regularity. To
 " exemplify my conceit, I have feen a garden, for the manner perchance incom-
 " parable; into which the firft accefs was a high walk like a terras, from whence
 " might be taken a general view of the whole plot below, but rather in a delight-
 " ful confufion, than with any plain diftinction of the pieces. From this the
 " beholder defcending many fteps, was afterwards conveyed again by feveral
 " mountings and valings, to various entertainments of his fcent and fight:
 " which I fhall not need to describe, for that were poetical; let me only note
 " this, that every one of thefe diverfities, was as if he had been magically transf-
 " ported into a new garden." Were the Terras and the fteps omitted, this
 " defcription would feem to be almoft entirely conformable to our prefent ideas of
 " ornamental planting. The paffage which follows is not lefs worthy of our notice.
 " But though other countries have more benefit of the Sun than we, and thereby
 " more

The terras mound uplifted ; the long line
 Deep delv'd of flat canal ; and all that toil,
 Misled by tasteless fashion, could atchieve
 To mar fair Nature's lineaments divine.

410

Long was the night of error, nor dispell'd
 By Him that rose at learning's earliest dawn,
 Prophet of unborn Science. On thy realm,
 Philosophy ! his sovereign lustre spread,

Yet

“ more properly tied to contemplate this delight ; yet have I seen in our own,
 “ a delicate and diligent curiosity, surely without parallel among foreign nations,
 “ namely in the garden of Sir Henry Fanshawe, at his seat in Ware-Park ; where
 “ I well remember, he did so precisely examine the tinctures and seasons of his
 “ flowers, that in their settings, the inwardest of which that were to come up at
 “ the same time, should be always a little darker than the utmost, and so serve
 “ them for a kind of gentle shadow.” This seems to be the very same species of
 improvement which Mr. Kent valued himself for inventing, in later times, and
 of executing, not indeed with flowers, but with flowering shrubs and evergreens,
 in his more finished pieces of scenery. The method of producing which effect
 has been described with great precision and judgment by a late ingenious writer.
 (See *Observations on modern Gardening*, sect. 14th, 15th, and 16th). It may
 however be doubted whether Sir Henry Fanshawe's garden were not too *delicate*
 and *diligent* a curiosity, since its panegyrist concludes the whole with telling us,
 that it was “ like a piece not of Nature, but of Art.” See *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*,
 page 64, edit. 4th.

Yet did he deign to light with casual glance 415
 The wilds of taste. Yes, * sagest VERULAM,
 'Twas thine to banish from the royal groves
 Each childish vanity of crisped knot
 And sculptor'd foliage; to the lawn restore
 Its ample space, and bid it feast the sight 420
 With verdure pure, unbroken, unabridg'd:
 For green is to the eye, what to the ear
 Is harmony, or to the smell the rose.

So

* Lord Bacon in the 46th of his essays describes what he calls *the platform of a princely garden*. If the Reader compare this description with that which Sir William Temple has given in his essay, entitled, *The Gardens of Epicurus*, written in a subsequent age, he will find the superiority of the former very apparent; for tho' both of them are much obscur'd by the false taste of the times in which they were written, yet the vigor of Lord Bacon's genius breaks frequently thro' the cloud, and gives us a very clear display of what the real merit of gardening would be when its true principles were ascertained. For instance, out of thirty acres which he allots for the whole of his Pleasure-ground, he selects the first four for a lawn, without any intervention of plot or parterre, "because" says he, "nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn." And "as for the making of knots of figures, with diverse coloured
 "earths, that they may lie under the windows of the house, on that side which
 "the garden stands, they be but toys, you may see as good sights many times
 "in tarts." Sir William Temple on the contrary tell us, that in the garden
 at Moor-park, which was his model of perfection, the first inlet to the whole

was

So taught the Sage, taught a degenerate reign
 What in Eliza's golden day was taste. 425
 Not but the mode of that romantic age,
 The age of tourneys, triumphs, and quaint masques,
 Glar'd with fantastic pageantry, which dimm'd
 The sober eye of truth, and dazzled ev'n
 The Sage himself; witness his arched hedge, 430

E

In

was a very broad gravel walk garnish'd with a row of Laurels which looked like Orange-trees, and was terminated at each end by a summer-House. The parterre or principal garden which makes the second part in each of their descriptions, it must be owned is equally devoid of simplicity in them both. "The garden (says his Lordship) is best to be square, encompassed with a stately arched hedge, the arches to be upon carpenters work, over every arch a little belly enough to receive a cage of birds, and, over every space between the arches, some other little figure with broad plates of round coloured glass, gilt for the sun to play upon." It would have been difficult for Sir William to make his more fantastic; he has however not made it more natural. The third part, which Lord Bacon calls the Heath, and the other the Wilderness, is that in which the Genius of Lord Bacon is most visible; "for this," says he, "I wish to be framed as much as may be to a natural wildness." And accordingly he gives us a description of it in the most agreeable and picturesque terms, inasmuch that it seems less the work of his own fancy than a delineation of that ornamental scenery which had no existence till above a century after it was written. Such, when he descended to matters of mere Elegance (for when we speak of Lord Bacon, to treat of these was to descend) were the amazing powers of his universal Genius.

In pillar'd state by carpentry upborn,
 With colour'd mirrors deck'd, and caged birds :
 But, when our step has pac'd his proud parterres,
 And reach'd the heath, then Nature glads our eye
 Sporting in all her lovely carelessness.

435

There smiles in varied tufts the velvet rose,
 There flaunts the gadding woodbine, fwells the ground
 In gentle hillocks, and around its fides
 Thro' blossom'd shades the secret pathway steals.

Thus, with a poet's power, the Sage's pen
 Pourtray'd that nicer negligence of scene,
 Which Taste approves. While He, delicious Swain,
 Who tun'd his oaten pipe by Mulla's stream,
 Accordant touch'd the stops in Dorian mood ;
 What time he 'gan to paint the fairy vale,
 Where stands the Fane of Venus. Well I ween
 That then, if ever, COLIN, thy fond hand
 Did steep its pencil in the well-fount clear

440

445

Of

Of true simplicity; and * "call'd in Art
 " Only to second Nature, and supply 450
 " All that the Nymph forgot, or left forlorn."
 Yet what avail'd the song? or what avail'd
 Ev'n thine, Thou chief of Bards, whose mighty mind,
 With inward light irradiate, mirror-like
 Receiv'd, and to mankind with ray reflex 455
 The sov'reign Planter's primal work display'd?
 † That work, "where not nice Art in curious knots,
 " But Nature boon pour'd forth on hill and dale
 " Flowers worthy of Paradise; while all around
 " Umbrageous grotts, and caves of cool recess, 460
 " And murmuring waters down the slope dispers'd,

E 2

" Or

* See Spencer's Fairy Queen, Book 4th, Canto the 10th: the passage immediately alluded to is in the 21st Stanza.

For all that Nature, by her mother wit,
 Could frame in earth and form of substance base
 Was there; and all that Nature did omit,
 Art (playing Nature's second part) supplied it.

† See Milton's inimitable description of the garden of Eden. Paradise Lost, Book 4th, part of which is here inserted.

“ Or held, by fringed banks, in chryſtal lakes,

“ Compoſe a rural ſeat of various view.”

’Twas thus great Nature’s Herald blazon’d high

That fair original impreſs, which ſhe bore

465

In ſtate ſublime; e’er miſcreated Art,

Offspring of ſin and ſhame, the banner ſeiz’d,

And with adulterate pageantry defil’d.

Yet vainly, MILTON, did thy voice proclaim

Theſe her primæval honours. Still ſhe lay

470

Defac’d, deflower’d, full many a ruthleſs year :

Alike, when Charles, the abjeſt tool of France,

Came back to ſmile his ſubjects into ſlaves ;

Or Belgic William, with his warriour frown,

Coldly declar’d them free ; in fetters ſtill

475

The Goddeſs pin’d, by both alike oppreſt.

Go to the Proof ! behold what TEMPLE call’d

A perfect Garden. There thou ſhalt not find

One blade of verdure, but with aching feet

From terras down to terras ſhalt deſcend,

480

Step

Step following step, by tedious flight of stairs :
 On leaden platforms now the noon-day sun
 Shall scorch thee ; now the dank arcades of stone
 Shall chill thy fervour ; happy, if at length
 Thou reach the Orchard, where * the sparing turf 485
 Thro' equal lines all centring in a point
 Yields thee a softer tread. And yet full oft
 O'er TEMPLE's studious hour did Truth preside,
 Sprinkling her lustre o'er his classic page :
 There hear his candor own in fashion's spite, 490

In

* The French at present seem to be equally sparing of this natural clothing of the Earth, altho' they have done us the honour to adopt our Bowling-Greens, and to improve upon them. This appears from the following article of the Encyclopedie translated verbatim.

" Boulingrin. N. S. In gardening is a species of Parterre composed of pieces
 " of divided turf with borders sloping (*en glacis*) and evergreens at the corners
 " and other parts of it. It is mowed four times a year to make the turf finer.
 " The invention of this kind of parterre comes from England, as also its name,
 " which is derived from *Boule* round, and *Grin* fine grass or turf. Boulingrins
 " are either simple, or compound ; the simple are all turf without ornament ;
 " the compound are cut into compartments of turf, embroidered with knots,
 " mixt with little paths, borders of flowers, yew-trees, and flowering shrubs.
 " Sand also of different colours contributes greatly to their value."

In spite of courtly dulness, hear it own

“ There is a grace in wild variety

“ Surpassing rule and order.” * TEMPLE, yes,

There is a grace ; and let eternal wreaths

Adorn their brows who fixt its empire here.

495

The Muse shall hail † the champions that herself

Led to the fair atchievement. ADDISON,

Thou

* The Passage here alluded to is as follows: “ What I have said of the best forms of Gardens is meant only of such as are in some sort regular, *for there may be other forms wholly irregular, that may, for ought I know, have more beauty than any of the others*: But they must owe it to some extraordinary dispositions of Nature in the seat, or some great race of fancy and judgment in the contrivance, which may reduce many disagreeing parts into some figure which shall yet upon the whole be very agreeable. Something of this I have seen in some places, and heard more of it from others who have lived much among the Chineses.” Sir William then gives us a kind of general account of the Chinese taste, and of their *Sharawadgi*, and concludes thus: “ But I should hardly advise any of these attempts in the figure of gardens among us, they are adventures of too hardy atchievement for any common hands; and tho’ there may be more honour if they succeed well, yet there is more dishonour if they fail, and ’tis twenty to one they will, whereas in regular figures it is hard to make any great and remarkable faults.” See Temple’s Miscellanies, Vol. I. Page 186. Fol. Ed.

† I had before called Bacon the prophet, and Milton the herald of true taste in Gardening. The former, because in developing the constituent properties of a princely

Thou polish'd Sage, or shall I call thee Bard,
 I see thee come: around thy temples play
 The lambent flames of humour, bright'ning mild 500
 Thy judgment into smiles; gracious thou com'st
 With Satire at thy side, who checks her frown,
 But not her secret sting. With bolder rage
 POPE next advances: his indignant arm
 Waves the poetic brand o'er Timon's shades, 505
 And

princely garden he had largely expatiated upon that adorned natural wildness which we now deem the essence of the art. The latter, on account of his having made this natural wildness the leading idea in his exquisite description of paradise. I here call Addison, Pope, Kent, &c. the Champions of this true taste, because they absolutely brought it into execution. The beginning therefore of an actual reformation may be fixed at the time when the Spectator first appeared. The reader will find an excellent chapter upon this subject in the Pleasures of the Imagination, published in N°. 414 of the Spectator; and also another paper written by the same hand, N°. 447; but perhaps nothing went further towards destroying the absurd taste of clipp'd evergreens than the fine ridicule upon them in the 173d Guardian, written by Mr. Pope.

It may not be amiss to inform the reader in this place, that *the history of modern Gardening*, of which the nature of didactic poetry would admit here only an episodical sketch, will shortly appear in a more extensive and methodical form, written with that peculiar taste and spirit which characterizes the pen of Mr. Walpole.

And lights them to destruction; the fierce blaze
Sweeps thro' each kindred Vista; * Groves to Groves
Nod their fraternal farewell, and expire.

And now, elate with fair-earn'd victory,
The Bard retires, and on the Bank of Thames

510

Erects his flag of triumph; wild it waves
In verdant splendor, and beholds, and hails
The King of Rivers, as he rolls along.

KENT is his bold associate, KENT who felt
The pencil's power: † but, fir'd by higher forms

515

Of Beauty, than that pencil knew to paint,
Work'd with the living hues that Nature lent,
And realiz'd his Landscapes. Generous He,

Who

* See Mr. Pope's Epistle on false taste, inscribed to the Earl of Burlington. Few readers, I suppose, need be informed that this line alludes to the following Couplet:

Grove nods to Grove, each alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.

† It is said that Mr. Kent frequently declared he caught his taste in gardening from reading the picturesque descriptions of Spenser. However this may be, the designs which he made for the works of that poet, are an incontestible proof, that they had no effect upon his executive powers as a painter.

THE ENGLISH GARDEN.

33

Who gave to Painting, what the wayward Nymph
Refus'd her Votary, those Elyfian scenes, 520
Which would she emulate, her daring hand
Must lavish all its energy sublime.

On thee too, SOUTHCOTE, shall the Muse bestow
No vulgar praise : for thou to humblest things
Could'st give ennobling beauties ; deck'd by thee, 525
* The simple Farm eclips'd the Garden's pride,
Ev'n as the virgin blush of innocence,

The harlotry of Art. Nor, SHENSTONE, thou
Shalt pass without thy meed, thou son of peace !
Who knew'st, perchance, to harmonize thy shades 530
Still softer than thy song ; yet was that song
Nor rude, nor inharmonious, when attun'd
To pastoral plaint, or tale of flighted love.
Him too, the living leader of thy powers,
Great Nature ! him the Muse shall hail in notes 535
Which antedate the praise true Genius claims

F

From

* Mr. Southcote was the introducer, or rather the inventor of the *Ferme ornée*, for it may be presumed that nothing more than the term is of French extraction.

From just Posterity ; Bards yet unborn
 Shall pay to BROWN that tribute, fitliest paid
 In strains, the beauty of his scenes inspire.

Meanwhile, ye youths ! whose sympathetic souls 540
 Would taste those genuine charms, which faintly smile
 In my descriptive song, O visit oft
 The finish'd scenes, that boast the forming hand
 Of these creative Genii ! feel ye there
 What REYNOLDS felt, when first the Vatican 545
 Unbarr'd her gates, and to his raptur'd eye
 Gave Raphael's glories ; feel what GARRICK felt,
 When first he breath'd the soul of Shakespear's page.
 So shall your Art, if call'd to grace a scene
 Yet unadorn'd, with taste instinctive give 550
 Each grace appropriate ; so your active eye
 Shall dart that glance prophetic, which awakes
 The slumbring Wood-nymphs ; gladly shall they rise
 Oread, and Dryad, from their verdurous beds,
 And fling their foliage, and arrange their stems, 555

As

As you, and beauty bid: the Naiad train,
Alike obsequious, from a thousand urns
Shall pour their chrystaline tide; while, hand in hand,
Vertumnus, and Pomona bring their stores,
Fruitage, and flowers of ev'ry blush, and scent,
Each varied season yields; to you they bring
The fragrant tribute; ye, with generous hand,
Diffuse the blessing wide, till Albion smile
One ample theatre of sylvan Grace.

560

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.



